

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An ink package comprising:

an ink bag including a pair of flexible walls which are opposed to each other and accommodating ink; and

an ink delivering portion having a passage through which an interior space and an exterior space of said ink bag are held in communication for delivering said ink in said ink bag to said exterior space,

wherein said ink delivering portion includes a fixing portion which is fixed to one ~~of~~ of two opposite ends of said ink bag, and an extending portion which is formed adjacent to said fixing portion ~~so as to extend and extends~~ therefrom along a length of the extending portion in a first direction from said one of the two opposite ends of said ink bag into the interior space toward the other of the two opposite ends thereof ~~into said interior space of said ink bag~~, said extending portion having an end distal from the fixing portion and having a cross sectional area which gradually decreases in the first ~~direction from said one of the opposite ends of said ink bag toward the other end thereof~~ direction at least from a point on the length until the end of the extending portion.

2. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein said extending portion has a thickness which gradually decreases in said first direction.

3. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein each of said fixing portion and said extending portion has a cross sectional area that gradually decreases in opposite second directions which are perpendicular to said first direction and a third direction in which said pair of walls are opposed to each other.

4. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein said pair of flexible walls are constituted by a pair of flexible sheets which are opposed to each other and which are connected to each other at peripheral edges thereof, said extending portion being symmetrical with respect to a plane including a connected surface at which said pair of flexible sheets are connected.

5. (Original) The ink package according to claim 4, wherein said extending portion has, at one of opposite ends thereof at which said extending portion is adjacent to said fixing portion, a second dimension as measured in a second direction perpendicular to said first direction and a third direction in which said pair of flexible sheets are opposed to each other, said second dimension being larger than a first dimension thereof as measured in said first direction.

6. (Original) The ink package according to claim 5, wherein said second dimension of said extending portion is larger than a third dimension thereof as measured in said third direction.

7. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein said passage extends through said fixing portion and said extending portion, said passage having a cross sectional area in said fixing portion larger than that in said extending portion.

8. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein said ink bag has, in a state in which the amount of ink in said ink bag is reduced to a predetermined minimum value after the ink has been used under an ordinary recommended condition, a non-contact portion in which said walls do not contact each other and in which the ink remains unless said ink delivering portion has extending portion, said extending portion having a configuration which substantially corresponding to that of said non-contact portion.

9. (Original) The ink package according to claim 1, wherein said passage comprises at least two passages which extend through said fixing portion and said extending

portion, said ink package further comprising a hollow insulating member which extends from said extending portion toward said interior space of said ink bag and which communicates with one of said at least two passages.

10. (Original) The ink package according to claim 9, wherein said hollow insulating member has an inside diameter smaller than that of said one of said at least two passages communicating with said hollow insulating member.

11. (Original) The ink package according to claim 9, wherein said hollow insulating member is formed integrally with said extending portion.

12. (Original) The ink package according to claim 9, wherein said ink delivering portion includes electrode supporting portions each of which closes one of opposite open ends of a corresponding one of said at least two passages on the side remote from said ink bag, said electrode supporting portions being provided for supporting a pair of electrodes.

13. (Original) The ink package according to claim 12, wherein one of said pair of electrodes is a hollow ink-extracting needle for extracting the ink in said ink bag.

14. (Original) The ink package according to claim 9, wherein said at least two passages are aligned with each other on a plane perpendicular to a direction in which said pair of flexible walls are opposed, said at least two passages being offset from a mid point of a dimension of said ink bag as measured on said plane in a direction perpendicular to said first direction.

15. (Currently Amended) An ink detecting apparatus which detects ink in an ink package that includes an ink bag accommodating ink and an ink delivering portion through which the ink in said ink bag is delivered from said ink bag, said ink detecting apparatus comprising:

a pair of electrodes provided to be held both at a first end of said ink bag to electrically conduct with the ink in said ink bag;

a hollow insulating member provided for one of said pair of electrodes to extend in a direction from the first end toward a second end of the ink bag that is opposite to the first end, such that said one of said pair of electrodes does not protrude into an interior space of said ink bag, the ink in said ink bag reaching said one of said pair of electrodes through said hollow insulating member;

an electric characteristics detecting device which detects electric characteristics between said pair of electrodes, and

wherein said ink delivering portion includes a passage within which the other of said pair of electrodes is located so as not to protrude into said interior space of said ~~ink bag~~-ink bag,

wherein the passage and the hollow insulating member are separate elements that are both held at the first end of ink bag and extend in the direction toward the second end; and

wherein the one of said pair of electrodes is not within the passage, and the other of said pair of electrodes is not within the hollow insulating member.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said ink package is removably mounted on a mounting portion, and said pair of electrodes are attached to at least one of said ink package and said mounting portion and extend toward said ink bag in a state in which said ink package is mounted on said mounting portion.

18. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said ink bag includes a pair of walls which are opposed to each other and which are flexible in a direction in which said pair of walls contact each other with a decrease in an amount of the ink in said ink bag, said ink bag having a contact portion in which said walls contact each other in a state in which the amount of ink in said ink bag is reduced to a

predetermined minimum value after the ink has been used under an ordinary recommended condition, and a non-contact portion in which said walls do not contact in said state and in which the ink remains, said hollow insulating member extending in said direction from said first end toward the second end beyond a boundary between said contact portion and said non-contact portion.

19. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein either one of said pair of electrodes is a hollow ink-extracting needle for extracting the ink from the ink bag.

20. (Original) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 17, wherein at least one of said pair of electrodes is attached to said ink package.

21. (Original) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 17, wherein at least one of said pair of electrodes is attached to said mounting portion.

22. (Original) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said hollow insulating member is formed integrally with said ink delivering portion.

23. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said ink delivering portion further includes: another passage which is different from the passage within which the other of said pair of electrodes is located; and an electrode supporting portion which closes one of opposite open ends of said another passage on the side remote from said ink bag and which is provided for supporting said one of said pair of electrodes such that said one of said pair of electrodes is located within said another passage, said hollow insulating member communicating with said another passage.

24. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said hollow insulating member has an inside diameter smaller than that of said another passage communicating with said hollow insulating member.

25. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said ink delivering portion further includes another electrode supporting portion which closes one of opposite ends of the passage on the side remote from said ink bag and which is provided for supporting the other of said pair of electrodes.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The ink detecting apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said ink delivering portion of said ink package includes a fixing portion which is fixed to the first end of said ink bag and an extending portion which is formed adjacent to said fixing portion so as to extend therefrom into said ink bag, said extending portion having a cross sectional area which decreases in a direction from said first end toward the second end.

28. (Currently Amended) An ink package comprising:
an ink bag accommodating ink and including a pair of walls which are opposed to each other and which are flexible in a direction in which said pair of walls contact each other with a decrease in an amount of the ink in said ink bag;

an ink delivering portion which is provided at a first end of said walls and is provided for supporting a pair of electrodes such that said pair of electrodes electrically conduct with the ink in said ink bag; and

a hollow insulating member provided for one of said pair of electrodes to extend in a direction from the first end toward a second end of the ink bag that is opposite to the first end, such that said one of said pair of electrodes does not protrude into an interior space of said ink bag, the ink in said ink bag reaching said one said pair of electrodes through said hollow insulating member,

wherein said ink delivering portion includes a passage within which the other of said pair of electrodes is located so as not to protrude into the interior space of the ~~ink bag~~ink bag,

wherein the passage and the hollow insulating member are separate elements that are both held at the first end of ink bag and extend in the direction toward the second end; and

wherein the one of said pair of electrodes is not within the passage, and the other of said pair of electrodes is not within the hollow insulating member.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The ink package according to claim 28, wherein either one of said pair of electrodes is a hollow ink-extracting needle for extracting the ink from said ink bag.

31. (Previously Presented) The ink package according to claim 28, wherein said ink bag has a contact portion in which said walls contact each other in a state in which the amount of ink in said ink bag is reduced to a predetermined minimum value after the ink has been used under an ordinary recommended condition, and a non-contact portion in which said walls do not contact in said state and in which the ink remains, said hollow insulating member extending in said direction from said first end toward the second end beyond a boundary between said contact portion and said non-contact portion.

32. (Original) The ink package according to claim 28, wherein said hollow insulating member is formed integrally with said ink delivering portion.

33. (Previously Presented) The ink package according to claim 28, wherein said ink delivering portion further includes: another passage which is different from the passage within which the other of said pair of electrodes is located; and an electrode supporting portion which closes one of opposite ends of said another passage on the side remote from

said ink bag and which is provided for supporting said one of said pair of electrodes such that said one of said pair of electrodes is located within said another passage, said hollow insulating member communicating with said another passage.

34. (Previously Presented) The ink package according to claim 33, wherein said hollow insulating member has an inside diameter smaller than that of another passage communicating with said hollow insulating member.

35. (Previously Presented) The ink package according to claim 28, wherein said ink delivering portion further includes another electrode supporting portion which closes one of opposite ends of the passage on the side remote from said ink bag and which is provided for supporting the other of said pair of electrodes.

36. (Canceled)